TO

THE PROPRIETORS

OF THE

DORSET AND SOMERSET CANAL.

THE COMMITTEE of Management, ſolicitous to diſcharge the truſt repoſed in them to the ſatisfaction of the Subſcribers, and of themſelves, conceive it their duty to lay before them the State and Progreſs of the Concern.

They therefore beg leave to ſtate, That the firſt Lot, from Coat, in the pariſh of Stratton on the Foſs, in the county of Somerſet, to Tomlyns Hill, near Leachham Coal Works, containing in length about ſeven furlongs, is navigable, and in all reſpects compleated, except the Towing Paths and Fence, which are nearly finiſhed.

That the ſecond Lot, commencing from the termination of the former, and ending at Coleford, on the weſtern ſide of a field called Aſhill, containing in length about ſix furlongs, is alſo navigable as far as the village of Coleford.

That the third and fourth Lots, commencing from the end of the laſt Lot, and terminating at Vobſter, containing in length about fourteen furlongs, are both cut, and in ſome parts filled with water, that they are in a great ſtate of forwardneſs, and the work proceeding.

That from the end of the fourth Lot, the Committee have, under their own immediate management, cut through the hard and almoſt impenetrable rock at Vobſter, and the adjoining lands, the whole being a length of above 300 yards, being the moſt difficult part of the whole line to execute; from which they have accumulated a very conſiderable quantity of valuable Lime Stone, part of which has already been found very ſerviceable in building the bridges and fence walls, and being burnt to lime for the purpoſes of this Concern.

From this point, the next Lot of Cutting will be through the lands of Thomas Horner, Eſq. in Mells, a length of about two miles and half, which will be very eaſy, and the work proceeded in as ſoon as the terms are ſettled with him, for the purchaſe of ſuch land as may be requiſite.

That from thence, the Canal will proceed to Elliott's Lane, a diſtance of about one mile and half, but whether by locks, caiſſoons, or inclined planes, the Committee have come to no reſolution; and they beg leave to obſerve, that as the Somerſetſhire Coal Canal, which is in a more forward ſtate than this Concern, is on the point of trying the effect of caiſſoons in a few days, (an invention from which great hopes of advantage and ſucceſs are entertained) this Committee have poſtponed the conſideration of the queſtion until the reſult of ſuch trial be known.

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The next Lot is from Elliott's Lane to Dyehouſe Lane, in Frome, a diſtance of about one mile and a quarter. This Lot has been contracted for, and the work is now proceeding, with great rapidity.

The Committee are happy in reporting, that no accident has happened in the progreſs of the works which they have undertaken, (except ſome trifling ſlides from the embankments, and thoſe leſs than they could have expected) and that, notwithſtanding the inclemency of the ſeaſons in which the works have been executed, (a circumſtance which has unavoidably tended not only to retard the execution, but to occaſion a conſiderable addition of expence) the Committee have every reaſon to believe that the Canal will be compleated to Frome below the ſum eſtimated.

The Committee having heard that reports have been induſtriouſly circulated, that many of the Coal Pits upon the line of Canal are diſcontinued, and that the quantity of Coals, which will hereafter be landed, will not be ſufficient to pay the tonnage on the Canal, as originally eſtimated, feel great pleaſure at having it in their power compleatly to contradict ſuch report; and to aſſure the Subſcribers, and the public, that from their own enquiries, and from the information furniſhed by Mr. BILLINGSLEY, from a particular and accurate enquiry, that at the time of ſoliciting the Act there were nine Collieries at work, of which not one has ſince been worked out, but that, in conſequence of the proſpect of an increaſed ſale of Coal, as ſoon as the Canal ſhall be compleated, five new works are already begun, and carrying on with every proſpect of ſucceſs, and ſeveral others in contemplation; and the Committee have no doubt but that the Country contains inexhauſtible bodies of Coal, which will aſſuredly be opened and brought into work, as ſoon as ſufficient ſale can be obtained by means of the Canal.

It is with peculiar ſatisfaction the Committee ſtate, that a flattering proſpect of a new trade is opened by the diſcovery of conſiderable quantities of valuable Iron Stone, in many parts of the line of Canal, from which very ſanguine hopes of profit to the Company are entertained by thoſe converſant with the ſubject, and who have tried and aſcertained its ſuperior quality. The Committee entertain no doubt but that other valuable ſources of trade will preſent themſelves from the various Minerals which are known to exiſt in this part of the line of Canal: but the great proſpect of advantage to be derived to the public, as well as to the Subſcribers, (next to that of ſupplying Coals at very reduced prices) is the certainty of ſupplying the country with Lime, an article ſo eſſentially neceſſary to all, and ſo much wanted for the purpoſes of agriculture in the extenſive country through which the Canal paſſes, and which will be ſupplied by the numerous and inexhauſtible Rocks of Lime Stone, which abound in the neighbourhood of the Collieries on the line of Canal.

The Committee have alſo to report, that they have found in their line of Canal a Free Stone of an excellent quality, which will be very advantageous in building the aqueducts near Frome, and bids fair to be an article of tonnage on the Canal.

They think it would be ſuperfluous in them to enter into any detail of the various articles which will be carried on the Canal, and of the advantages which will ariſe from the various communications, which the Canal will eventually have with the different parts of the kingdom. The Committee have reaſon to believe, that the Canal will be compleated to Frome at lateſt by Midſummer 1799, immediately after which a very conſiderable and accumulating intereſt will accrue to the Subſcribers.

Upon the whole, the Committee have full reaſon to believe, that the Concern, when compleat, will equal the expectation that has been formed of it; that it will be found productive of great advantages to the Subſcribers; and place this Country on a footing equal to other parts of the kingdom, where trade and commerce ſo eminently flouriſh.

The Total Amount of the Expences which have been incurred in ſoliciting and obtaining the Act of Parliament, and alſo of executing the Canal to this time, is

£.16,257 5 4½

and is arranged under the different heads ſubjoined to this Report, which ſum alſo comprizes the monies which have been expended in erecting brick-kilns on different parts of the line, of making large quantities of bricks, of raiſing ſtones for buildings and lime, and alſo the purchaſe of timber, and other materials and implements to be uſed in executing the Canal, all which are in poſſeſſion of the Company, and are valued at upwards of £.1800.

	£.	s.	d.
Expences before and in paſſing the Act,	5472	8	0
Do. Clerk's, Engineer's, and Aſſiſtants' Salaries,	1272	10	0
Land and Treſpaſs,	850	16	2½
Cutting and other Expences attendant on the ſame,	6091	9	7½
Maſonry, in Bridges, Stop Gates, &c.	854	18	1¾
Carpentry and Sawing,	105	7	3½
Timber,	777	15	3
Boat Building,	31	6	6
Smith's Work,	67	17	7¼
Bricks, Brick Yard, &c.	250	11	5
Committee of Management's Expences,	144	18	0
Do. General Do.	25	19	6
Superintendants,	157	13	6½
Petty Charges,	153	14	3½
	£.16,257	5	4½

4th December, 1797.

REPORT

OF

Committee of Management

OF THE

Dorfet and Somerfet Canal.